

AMENDMENT

Listing of the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claim 1 (cancelled).

Claim 2 (previously presented). The label according to claim 5, wherein the splice member is transparent.

Claims 3 and 4 (cancelled).

Claim 5 (currently amended). A heat shrinkable label for product containers comprising:

- at least two elongated webs of a heat shrinkable laminate, each web provided with a continuous series of printed labels thereon, the labels positioned end to end along each web, each web having opposite side edges defining a width, a leading end and a trailing end; and
- at least one elongated, clear, heat shrinkable splice tape having top and bottom surfaces and an adhesive on the bottom surface, the ~~adhesive adhering~~ the splice tape overlapping and adhering to a portion of one web adjacent the leading end and overlapping and adhering to a portion of another web adjacent the trailing end, ~~such that the splice tape extending extends~~ transversely to the webs across a majority of the width defined by the webs to form a continuous web,
- each of the webs being bi-directionally shrinkable such that each has a first shrinkage percentage in the longitudinal direction and a second shrinkage percentage in the lateral direction;
- the at least one splice tape being bi-directionally shrinkable such that it has a third shrinkage percentage in the lateral direction and a fourth shrinkage percentage in the longitudinal direction;

wherein the shrinkage percentages for the splice tape are selected such that, upon application of heat to each continuous web and the adhered splice tape, the first shrinkage percentage of the continuous web substantially matched the third shrinkage percentage of the adhered splice tape and the second shrinkage percentage of the continuous web substantially matched the fourth shrinkage percentage of the splice tape such that the continuous webs shrinks along with the adhered splice tape without causing substantial distortion to the printing on the associated labels.

Claim 6 (previously presented). The heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein the splice tape is adhered to the ends of the webs over the printing thereon.

Claim 7 (previously presented). The heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein the laminate material of the webs comprises a polypropylene film.

Claim 8 (previously presented). The heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5, wherein each of the webs comprises a laminate of two plies of polypropylene film.

Claim 9 (previously presented). The heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein the material of the splice tape comprises a polyethylene film.

Claim 10 (previously presented). The heat shrinkable container label according to claim 9 wherein each of the webs comprises a laminate of a polypropylene film.

Claim 11 (previously presented). The heat shrinkable container label according to claim 5 wherein each web is provided on a separate roll.

Claims 12 - 21 (cancelled).

Claim 22 (previously presented). A heat shrinkable label for a container comprising:

at least two elongated webs each including a heat shrinkable laminate, each web having opposite side edges defining a width and a continuous series of printed labels thereon, the labels positioned end to end longitudinally along each web, each web having a leading end portion and a trailing end portion, each of the webs being bi-directionally shrinkable such that each has a first shrinkage percentage in a longitudinal direction and a second shrinkage percentage in a lateral direction;

an elongated splice tape having a length and opposite side edges defining a width and comprised substantially of heat shrinkable material, the splice tape being bi-directionally shrinkable such that it has a third shrinkage percentage in a lateral direction and a fourth shrinkage percentage in a longitudinal direction; and

an adhesive coating on a surface defined by the splice tape, the splice tape overlapping and the adhesive coating securing the splice tape to the leading end portion of one web and the splice tape overlapping and adhesive coating securing the splice tape to the trailing end portion of another web, ~~such that~~ the splice tape extending ~~extends~~ transversely to the webs across a majority of the width of the webs such that a continuous web is formed,

wherein the shrinkage percentages for the splice tape are selected such that, upon application of heat to each continuous web and the adhered splice tape, the first shrinkage percentage of the continuous web substantially matched the third shrinkage percentage of the adhered splice tape and the second shrinkage percentage of the continuous web substantially matched the fourth shrinkage percentage of the splice tape such that the continuous webs shrinks along with the adhered splice tape to substantially limit printing distortion due to differential shrinkage between the splice tape and the adjacent portions of the webs.

Claim 23 (cancelled).